

Train Gamers Gazette

A Train Gamers Association, Inc Newsletter

Spring 1997

Volume 4 Number 1

The Fall and Rise of Mayfair Games, Inc

A New Direction
for RailCon
and

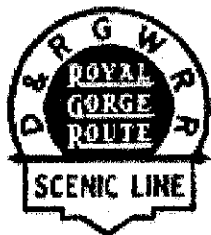
Take a Ride on
the Reading: Variants for 1830
by Alan Moon

Announcing the TGA's 1997 Open House

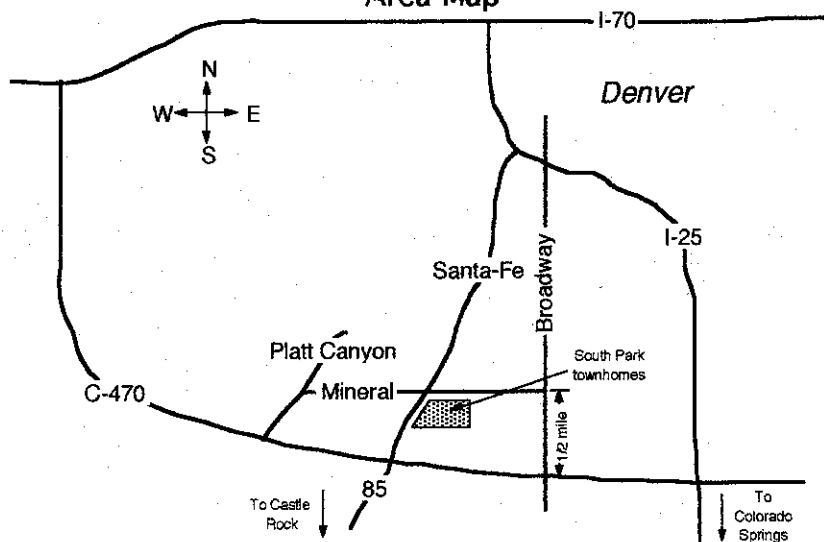
A TGA Open House is the best way we know to introduce train gamers to the Train Gamers Association and what we are all about. It is also a fine way to introduce novices to the hobby of train gaming. So, if you and your friend are interested in playing train games, come join us for two days of informal gaming. We thank Randy Pletzer for graciously opening his home to us and ask that you call him to let him know that you plan to attend. TGA points will be earned at this gathering for TGA members. TGA members are encouraged to attend and we welcome people not familiar with the TGA or train games.

TGA Open House*
May 3-4, 1997
2974C West Long Drive
Littleton, CO 80120
Information: Randy
Pletzer
303-738-1364
Puffing Billy
Conductors:
Randy Pletzer
Heather Barnhorst

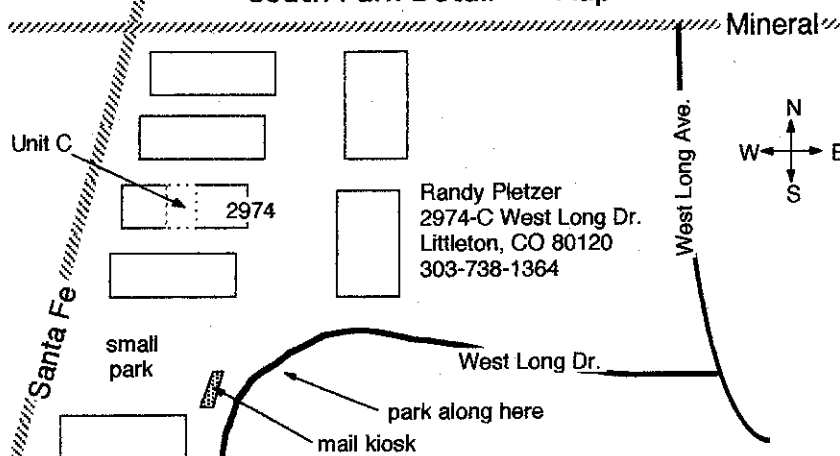
Randy and Heather are willing to find places for people coming from out of state or other long distances to stay. Just call us and we'll find you a place to sleep in a local train gamer's home.



Map to Randy Pletzer's Home
Area Map



South Park Detail Map



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The story of Mayfair Games as it closes its doors and reopens for business under new management

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Variants for 1830 by Alan Moon, a train game designer of much renown. A reprint by permission of Avalon Hill.

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The Train Gamers Association was organized to promote train gaming on both the national and local levels. We boast of members from Australia, Canada, England, Italy and the U.S. with many train game designers and manufacturers participating in our organization. Membership benefits include a TGA t-shirt, access to the Train Gamers Directory, information about local TGA gaming clubs forming around the country, participation in the TGA Train Gamers Ranking System, news on Puffing Billy Tournaments™, reports on RailCon '97, the national train gaming conference, and a subscription to the Train Gamers Gazette. Each issue comes with at least one game variant/insert.

The following game inserts are still available for purchase: Fall 1994: **1835 Minor Variant**; Spring 1995: **Rails to the South Pole, Transatlantic Rails**; Summer 1995: **The Coalfields Variant**; Fall 1995: **Joint Venture Agreements**; Winter 1995: **A Christmas Potpourri**; Spring 1996: **The Pere Marquette: An 1830 Variant**; Summer 1996: **Transpacific Rails**; Winter 1996: **1837 Tables in English, 1870 Stock Table for 1830**

If you are a TGA member and would like to purchase a back issue, send \$4.00 per issue to the TGA.

Letter from

the Editor

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed that the Spring issue of the TGG is a trifle late but I have good reason—Good News! As I will detail later in this issue, it appeared that Mayfair had closed down business forever in late January. Most of us are aware of this now, but I had been in contact with Lou Rexing at Mayfair, an old acquaintance and a man I respect quite a bit. He told me to hold off on any announcement of the demise of Mayfair because it might prove to be premature! And, as you will see in our feature article, it was. So, I made an editorial decision to hold off on the TGG until I could report to you the full story. I think all of you will agree that it was worth waiting a few weeks to receive this issue since it does contain such wonderful news for train gamers around the country.

Some of you have been e-mailing or calling me about the new publication **Rail Gamer**. I cannot tell you much since I have not received any of the info that you have in the mail. What I have has been photocopied and sent me. I can tell you this—David Metheny is a TGA member of long-standing and it seems to me that the format is somewhat similar to the TGG minus the game reviews and, perhaps, the game variants. You have asked me if I think you should subscribe. How can I answer a question like that? All I can do is say that if you think subscribing to the **Rail Gamer** would foster and promote train gaming then

please do so. Or if you believe that you would enjoy receiving and reading the publication then by all means buy it. Personally I would like to see both publications branch out and not cover the same materials so that both of them can be the maximum benefit to you, the train gamer.

Yes, it is true, there will be no Puffing Billy Tournament at Three-Rivers Con in Pittsburgh on Memorial Day weekend. Andon Unlimited, the convention organizers, decided to have Mr. John Bohrer of Winsome Games run his Superchief tournament and we felt that it would be a disservice to train gamers at the convention to attempt to run two separate train game tournaments at the same convention. What I saw of the schedule, it appears to me that 18xxers should enjoy the tourney but don't expect Express, Freight Train, and Iron Dragon since these games have been disallowed in the tournament due to the philosophy of the tournament mission. Once again I say if you think you would enjoy playing train games at Three-Rivers Con then participate in the Superchief.

Also, the TGA is implementing a new program, the Divisional PBT, that could mean more TGA points for members so check out the article on that in this issue.

Until we meet again,

Heather

Heather Barnhorst

The Fall and Rise of Mayfair Games, Inc

by Heather Barnhorst

ICE and Mayfair are pleased to announce that they have reached an agreement concerning the acquisition of the business of Mayfair and its game lines by ICE. Mayfair's business will retain a separate identity and will operate as a stand-alone company. The actual structure and management has not been finalized as yet and further press releases will clarify matters.

The new Mayfair will retain the services of both Darwin and Peter Bromley in a non-managerial game design and development capacity.

Mayfair will continue to publish *The Settlers of Catan* and will institute a demo and tournament program centering around this game. Mayfair will also publish future Klaus Teuber products including *The Settlers of Catan* boardgame expansions, *The Settlers of Catan* card game and its expansions, and *Entdecker*. Mayfair will continue to publish the classic train games and licensed boardgames for which Mayfair is so well known. Mayfair will also be publishing addition games, including designs from Bernd Brunnhofer, Wolfgang Kramer and Alan Moon.

Mayfair does not plan to continue publishing *Fantasy Adventures*, *Chill*, *Under-*

ground, or *Sim City*. All of these properties will be offered for sale.

ICE Management

The above announcement was made at the 1997 GAMA Trade show in Reno, NV; it ended a three month period of anxiety, disappointment and elation for train gamers across North America. For those of you who many not be aware ICE stands for Iron Crown Enterprises. ICE has been the long-time producer of Middle Earth related games such as the card game and the RPG system, as well as *Silent Death*, *Rolemaster* and a host of other games.

While some of us had been aware that Mayfair Games was experiencing some financial difficulties, it was not until November of 1996 that our suspicions were confirmed when the company laid off two thirds of its employee workforce.

The TGA Board had discussed our concern about Mayfair's ailing financial health starting sometime in late summer and had already made contingency plans for our operations if Mayfair should fold. While Mayfair did not support us on the whole, the TGA did derive some income from advertising which Mayfair placed in our various publications and the

organization benefitted as a whole by Mayfair's ability and willingness to send Puffing Billy conductors to various conventions around the country. In short, Mayfair Games had been a good corporate sponsor to the TGA. That all train gamers enjoyed Mayfair's production of train games goes without saying.

It was at the point of the layoffs that many of us prepared ourselves for the end and it was not long in coming. The success of the **Settlers of Catan** games (first and second editions) had allowed some of us to hope that even then Mayfair would be able to pull itself back from the brink of financial insolvency but it was a forlorn hope at best.

The official announcement that the company was closing its doors came at the end of January when it was announced that Darwin and Peter Bromley, along with Trella Wilhite, would be setting up their own consultancy firm and that Mayfair Games, Inc would be shut down on February 21st.

There are many people who would like to debate why Mayfair failed. Some blame personal problems invading the work space, others blame bad marketing decisions, others talk about a downturn in the gaming market as a whole. I don't know if any one problem could have caused Mayfair's demise or if it was a mixture of many difficulties but I also know that this is not the forum to debate the issue. Most train gamers are happy to accept the fact that Mayfair has risen from the ashes and will be producing new train games in the near future.

Yet, that was not the end of the story. Rumors abounded that Mayfair was up for sale and might still return to life.

Continued on page 4

convention news

Following is a listing of sanctioned Puffing Billy Tournaments taking place in future months.

Gamefest '97

April 4, 5, 6 1997
Big Four Building - Stampede Grounds
Calgary, AB Canada
Information:
<http://www.tdimports.com/gamefest/gamefest.html>
Puffing Billy Conductor:
Jim Cargill

TGA Open House

May 3-4, 1997
2974C West Long Drive
Littleton, CO 80120
Information: Randy Pletzer
303-738-1364
Puffing Billy Conductors:
Randy Pletzer
Heather Barnhorst
Places to sleep in local train gamers homes can be arranged for anyone coming long distances.

Gamex

May 23-26, 1997
LAX Wyndham
Los Angeles, CA
Info: Strategican
818-848-1748
Puffing Billy Conductors:
Nancy Ballard
Heather Barnhorst
*Divisional Tournament

BenCon 96

May 29-June 1, 1997
Red Lion Hotel Stapleton
Denver, CO
An all benefit gaming convention
Info: whitet@csn.net
303-665-7062
Puffing Billy Conductors:
Heather Barnhorst
Kristopher Marquardt

Dragon Con 96

July 1996
Atlanta, GA
Puffing Billy Conductor:
Anthony Carver

Continued from page 3

At one point, a sale to Wargames West seemed imminent but the deal fell through in the eleventh hour. As a side note, five of the six remaining Mayfair Games, Inc employees were hired by Wargames West and now work in what appears to be a new manufacturing arm of the long-time distributor. Many of them I had come to know over the past few years and I can wish them only the best in their new endeavor.

At the last, only Lou Rexing, Mayfair's longtime Sales Manager, remained at the company to fill orders and field questions by the loyal customers of the company.

That might have seemed the end but in my conversations with Lou, I had been told to hold back on making any definitive statement about Mayfair's demise in the TGG, that perhaps there was life in the old girl yet. Of course, Lou could not give me any more details until contracts had been signed or an official announcement had been made. This announcement was made, as I have said, at the GAMA Trade show.

Again, after conversations that I have had with Lou, I feel quite excited about this newest incarnation of the game company. Lou has assured me that India Rails will be put back onto Mayfair's production schedule and that a tentative fall date has been set for its release. A nice touch is that India Rails will be released as a boxed game--that's right a boxed game! For the many train gamers who have suffered with the incredible bubbling, cracking, fall apart at the worst moment tube games, this announcement will bring us much relief.

As for the 18xx games, I cannot tell you. Lou had not

really looked at the numbers yet to see if they were financially feasible to produce. Let's face it, the train game genre of the market is a small one. If you love these games, call or e-mail Mayfair and let them know that you care about the continued survival of their 18xx line. Tell them what they are worth to you and what you would really pay for them. Be honest because that is the only way Lou can make an informed decision about producing these wonderful games. Remember, Mayfair Games still has the rights to produce Bill Dixon's **1832** and **1850**. The Barnhorst/Marquardt **1869** was still in negotiations when Mayfair shut down so that game is even farther up in the air than the Dixon creations.

Not only did Lou confirm that Mayfair Games, Inc was still committed to producing train games but that the company wished to remain as supportive as possible of the TGA. In their leaner incarnation, that might not mean advertising revenue because money might be tight for a while but in concrete ways that would benefit our organization. Now, to me that if that kind of support is to be meaningful, it must translate as a benefit to the many train gamers who have given of their time and money to help keep the TGA going and growing. The details have yet to be worked out but I have some definite proposals that I will discuss with Lou and the new owners of Mayfair Games, Inc..

So, Mayfair has died and been reborn. Train gamers across the country are applauding because it means that our addiction will still be fed. New installments of our beloved train game systems such as Empire Builder will appear and original entries to the genre can be anticipated.

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A New Direction for RailCon '97

by Heather Barnhorst

As many of you will be aware of by now, Mayfair Games fell on hard times in the last of the quarter of 1996 and, for a variety of reasons, closed its doors under the Bromley banner in February of 1997. This event caused consternation among train gamers everywhere. No other mass-market game manufacturer was seen to be able to take Mayfair's place as a producer of train games and a supporter of train gaming in North America. Happily enough, Mayfair is reopening its doors under somewhat different management (see Feature Article this issue).

The TGA had been aware of these developments for some time and had been making contingency plans to deal with the loss of revenue and general convention support if Mayfair Games went out of business. One of the issues that fell under heavy discussion was what to do about RailCon?

As you know, RailCon was originally conceived to be a convention which moved about the country to allow access to it by as many interested train gamers as possible. The first RailCon took place in Denver, the second in Lancaster, PA. The third was bid out and the Worcester, MA package won. We were very excited about this location and it breaks our hearts now to have to say that RailCon '97 will not take place

in Massachusetts. This development is not because of any problems with the site or our liaison there but comes out of financial necessity.

RailCon is an expensive proposition. In the last two conventions we have either lost a few hundred dollars or broken even. It has always been a concern of ours that RailCon not cause financial harm to the TGA if it should fail. Such an event could break the TGA which does not have large coffers. During RailCon's inception, the people at Mayfair guaranteed to the TGA that they would underwrite any losses that were incurred by the convention--not because they wanted RailCon to be a mouthpiece for their products but because they wanted to support train gaming and this enterprise seemed the best way to do so. With Mayfair no longer able to make this guarantee to the TGA, we have had to rethink how we will stage RailCon.

A number of factors went into the reshaping of RailCon '97. We wanted the convention fees to stay at the same level for our attendees (in fact, the convention fees will be less than last year), while maintaining a high level of professionalism. We wanted to keep the site up to the standards we had set in our previous conventions and yet, we needed to reduce expenses and

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DEXCON 6

July 2 - 6, 1997
Sheraton Meadowlands
East Rutherford, NJ.
Information: Double Exposure
Hotline at (718) 881-4575
or visit our website at <http://www.io.com/~doublex/>
Puffing Billy Conductor:

Dave Lionetti
Come join Dave and the Dexcon 6 crew for this convention new to the Puffing Billy circuit. Dave has promised to run demos of the train games in the tourney on Thursday and then the PBT proper starts on Friday.

Origins '96

July 17-21, 1997
Columbus Ohio Convention Center
Columbus, OH
Info: Andon Unlimited
206-204-5815
Puffing Billy Conductors:
Heather Barnhorst
Kris Marquardt
and others
*Divisional Tournament

Gen Con Game Faire 1996

August 7-10, 1997
MECCA Convention Center
Milwaukee, WI
Info: Gen Con
Puffing Billy Conductors:
Heather Barnhorst
Kris Marquardt
and others
*Divisional Tournament

RailCon '97/TactiCon '97

September 11-14, 1997
Sheraton Hotel West
Lakewood, CO
Info: TGA
P.O. Box 461072
Aurora, CO 80046-1072
303-680-7824
tgaatrains@aol.com

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Continued on page 6

convention news

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Puffing Billy Conductors:

Heather Barnhorst and other TGA members

RailCon will be run in conjunction with TactiCon this year. You may register for RailCon '97 in one of two ways. You may preregister with the TGA and we will make all arrangements with TactiCon concerning badge and event fees. If you wait until the weekend of TactiCon to register, you will have to register for TactiCon and RailCon separately. That will include a \$25 registration fee for the convention and a \$15 event fee for RailCon. As a way of ensuring that the high level of competition that RailCon attendees have been used to experiencing at our con, we have worked out with TactiCon organizers that no individual tournament fees will be charged, only the \$15 event fee for RailCon. This decision ensures that we will not attract gamers only interested in participating in one train game the entire weekend and guarantee, we hope, a high level of play.

AndCon '97

September 25-28, 1997

Columbus, OH

Info: Andon Unlimited

206-204-5815

Puffing Billy Conductor:

Anthony Carver

We are still searching for a Puffing Billy Conductor to run a special PBT at AvalonCon. The dates are July 31-August 3, 1997. Anyone interested in undertaking the enterprise should contact the TGA.

Remember: If you would like to run a Puffing Billy Tournament, you must contact the TGA first to have your PBT sanctioned. Advanced warning will also allow us to help publicize your tournament.

Continued from page 5

reduce risk of loss to the TGA. We decided the best way to do this would be to find another convention which would act as an umbrella convention and could take up much of the cost of operating overhead. In this way, RailCon '97 would receive the benefits of the host convention such as lower rental costs, lower sleeping room rates, better pr and better advertising without taking much of the risk.

We looked at several conventions including GenCon, an LA convention and TactiCon in Denver. GenCon was ruled out because, at the time, we didn't know if GenCon would exist and because we didn't think it would be easy to work with convention management. We decided against the LA convention because it was on the West coast. This narrowed down our choices to TactiCon which meant bringing RailCon back to Denver. This decision made a lot of financial sense to us. One, it had the advantage of being local for the convention organizers which cut down on shipping and transportation costs. We also knew that we could work with the TactiCon organizers who are eager to have RailCon become part of their convention. There are other advantages for RailCon attendees, including:

- Convenient, frequent and fairly inexpensive airfares into Denver
- Inexpensive room rates
- Access to an extensive Exhibitor Area
- Access to a games auction which will include a train games section
- Fairly inexpensive catering prices to keep the cost of the Annual Banquet down

As an added advantage, you will be registered with TactiCon as well and may partici-

pate in the larger convention in addition to RailCon if you wish.

How will this work for you? You can register for RailCon '97 in one of two ways. You may preregister with the TGA and we will make all arrangements with the convention concerning badge and event fees. If you wait until the weekend of TactiCon to register, you will have to register for TactiCon and RailCon separately. That will include a \$25 registration fee for the convention and a \$15 event fee for RailCon. As a way of ensuring that the high level of competition that RailCon attendees have been used to experiencing at our con, we have worked out with TactiCon organizers that no individual tournament fees will be charged, only the \$15 event fee for RailCon. This decision ensures that we will not attract gamers only interested in participating in one train game the entire weekend and guarantee, we hope, a high level of play.

After you have registered for the convention, you will proceed to the RailCon '97 area and we will handle all tournament registration and organization from there on in. Nothing could be simpler. Of course, the easiest process, is to simply preregister now and let us do all the interface with TactiCon for you.

So, for now, RailCon will become attached to TactiCon. This decision will make RailCon a more stable convention whose added benefits will create a better gaming environment while enhancing all the aspects of RailCon that makes it the premier train gaming experience of the year.

Game

Variant

Take a Ride on the Reading: Variants for 1830

by Alan Moon

1830 is a trademark owned by the Avalon Hill Game Company.

Take A Ride on the Reading appeared in the General Vol 23, Number 6, and is reprinted, in its entirety, with their permission. Subscriptions to the General can be obtained through the Avalon Hill Game Company at 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214-9989. In 1996 a one year subscription was \$18 (USA) and a two year subscription was \$29 (USA).

This is the first time Mr. Moon's work has graced these pages since he left The Avalon Hill Game Company in 1983. Since then, he has relocated to Massachusetts, has married, and now does free-lance game design and consulting.

I first played 1830 in the summer of 1983 at the Detroit Origins. The Tresham brothers had brought the game over for Bruce Shelley and Tom Shaw to look over for possible publication by The Avalon Hill Game Company. We played several games of the original version that weekend, and while the game had some great ideas and a lot of potential, it just didn't quite work right. Still, a contract was negotiated and Bruce began work on the development. Three years and many versions later, the game became a reality. Was it worth the wait? Well, would I be writing my first article in over four years if it wasn't?

The biggest problem in the original design was the seeming inevitability that every game would end with one player going bankrupt, rather than the game ending with the bank exhausted. It is certainly still possible for the game to end in bankruptcy, but it is unlikely. Outfoxing a player on the stock market, the type of action that used to spell doom for that player, now usually just ruins his chances of winning instead.









Of course, there have been numerous changes in the game since 1983, but since I was not directly involved in the playtest, I am not the best person to describe them. Perhaps Bruce will volunteer some day. What I do have

to offer is a variant for the game which consists of changing a few hexes and tiles, and adding a ninth company.

After you've played five to ten games of 1930, you will have probably been president of each of the eight corporations in the game. At this point, you have also

probably figured out all the best tile combinations and possible stock manipulations. For some people, the game is then "learned" and there is not enough variety and incentive to play it much more. Others, however, will go on in an attempt to master the game, rather than just "know" it. I think this variant offers something for both types of players. The "Reading" variant adds some variety to the game. It also places a premium on player decisions involving the purchase of diesels, since they are now slightly cheaper and probably even more valuable, especially if you prolong the game by adding the extra \$8000 I suggest.

The Reading, like all the corporations, has definite advantages and disadvantages. Its major drawback is the number of tokens, allowing it to place only one station besides its home base. This will make the placement of this station extremely crucial because of the almost certain competition with the B&O, PA and C&O over the same routes. The main advantage lies in the president's triple-share certificate. Perhaps the best way to

| | |
|--|--|
|  Reading Railroad PRESIDENT 3 SHARES 30% |  Reading Railroad 1 SHARE 10% |
|  Reading Railroad 1 SHARE 10% |  Reading Railroad 1 SHARE 10% |
|  Reading Railroad 1 SHARE 10% |  Reading Railroad 1 SHARE 10% |
|  Reading Railroad 1 SHARE 10% |  Reading Railroad 1 SHARE 10% |

run this corporation is to bring it on late in the game and set the price at \$100. With the \$1000 the company receives as operating funds, it will be able to buy a diesel and place the extra stations, and run for cash each turn.

The proposed tile changes make the southeast section of the mapboard a hotbed of activity instead of confining it to simply B&O runs. In addition, there will be fierce competition for Boston and more chance for the B&M to expand to the north and northwest, and more chance for the CP to build southeast to New York City.

The new rules regarding obsolete trains are to ease the pain of the player who buys a new engine one turn before it becomes obsolete. Now he at least gets one turn to use it and can get some of his money back. This also gives each player a chance for the trade-in for a diesel.

Taking A Ride

1. The *Reading* is added as a ninth railroad for purchase.

a. The *Reading's* base hex is H14. This hex is now a permanent grey hex (as shown on the New Tiles Chart). All routes may be traced through this hex; the *Reading* base station does not prevent a route being traced through this hex. Any corporation may begin or end their route by counting the *Reading* station as in the normal rules of play, but only the *Reading* itself can count the base station as an intermediary stop on a run.

b. The *Reading* President's Certificate is a 30% share. (Note that this modifies several rules, especially 13.0.)

c. The *Reading* has only two tokens.

2. The *Pennsylvania's* base hex, H12, is changed to a different permanent grey hex, similar to the *Reading's* base hex, as shown on the New Tiles Chart. All the rules in 1. a. now apply to this hex as well.

3. Baltimore and Boston have different green and brown tiles. Grey tiles K15 and D24, and the red section for the Deep South (K13) are also changed. Consult the accompanying New Tiles Chart.

4. Train Changes:

a. Add one more "4" train.
b. Use the optional "6" train.
c. Diesels now cost \$750 with a trade-in engine, or \$900 without.

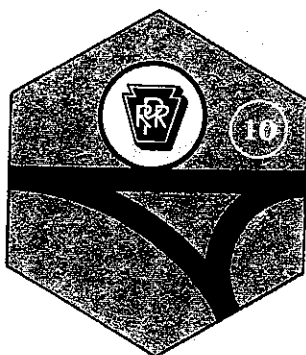
d. Trains that become obsolete are not removed until after the owning corporation's next operating turn. For example: Player A buys the first "4" train making all "2" trains obsolete; Player B, who owns a "2" train, does not have to remove it until after his next operating turn. And if Player A owns a "2" train, he would not have to remove it until after his next turn of operation.

5. The player who buys the *Camden & Amboy* private company now has a choice of taking a share of either the *Pennsylvania* or of the *Reading*.

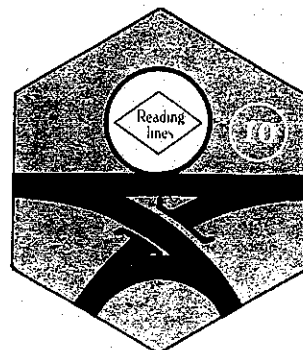
6. Increase the number of certificates each player can hold by one, regardless of the number of players in the game.

7. Optional Rule: add \$8000 to the game bank. This will guarantee at least three more operating rounds in the game and will make the decision of whether to buy a diesel more important.

NEW TILES CHART



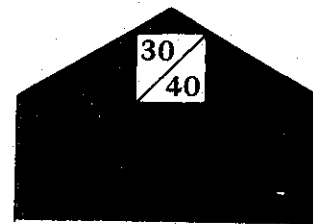
Hex H12, Pennsylvania Base (Grey)



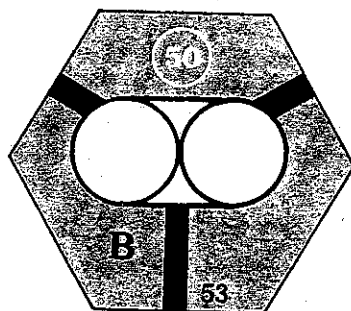
Hex H14, Reading Base (Grey)



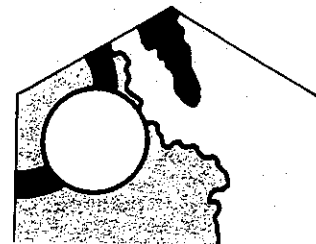
Hex D24 (Grey)



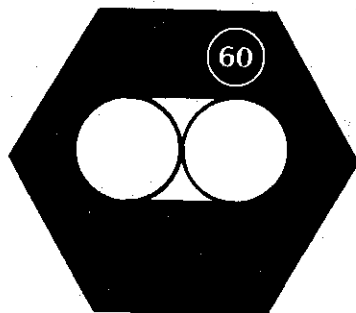
Hex K13, Deep South (Red)



Baltimore/Boston Tile (Green)



Hex K15 (Grey)



Baltimore/Boston Tile (Brown)

1997 Roadmap for 18xx Gamekits by Chris Lawson

by Chris Lawson

The following will give you an idea of what I am working on and expect (or hope) to produce in 1997. In 1996 I produced three separate gamekits (1899, 1841 and 1876) as well as the 1825 Component set, this year I hope to release even more new gamekits than last year. My production plans are not definite and very informal, so please bear with me if things take longer than expected.

The first paragraph is an informal 'where am I in design stage' while the second paragraph is a short description of the game.

1842 by Wolfram Janich

Currently I am waiting for feedback from Wolfram Janich as I have just sent him copies of the 1842 components. I will be starting the Maps soon and then it will be just the rule book to finish (which does require quite a bit of work as I have many questions on the rules). The gamekit will be of a similar size as 1899 (in terms of components) and I hope the price will be in the same region. Please note

that Wolfram sold his 1842 gamekit at three times the price of my 1899 but we have not agreed on how much commission he is to receive.

1842 is based on the 1835 style of game and is located in the Holstein area of Northern Germany. It has Minors, shares are available in tiers and includes new features such as the HAV Corporation (shares of which are owned by the other Corporations and sole purpose is to build on the two Hamburg/Harburg hexes) and limited inland City upgrades (where a city must be connected to an E/W or N/S route before the tile can be upgraded). The game contains one Private, five Minor Railways and seven Railway Corporations (eight if you count the HAV) it is designed for 3 to 5 players and takes 4 to 5 hours to play (based on the standard that 1840 takes 4 hours to play).

18TN by Mark Derrick

Next is 18TN, I have also just sent off copies of the components to Mark Der-

Dear Heather:

Let me add my own comments to those of Mark Derrick. I'm not sure if a new breed of 18xx games is needed, but 18xx games in general frequently run too long. I'd vote for either setting a time limit (and this could apply equally to any rail game, especially during a PBT) and letting a timekeeper announce the end of the game; or for setting a victory condition that assures a reasonable duration (although with some players, even that may not be adequate).

Al Stiles

Dear Al,

As you know, the TGA has set time guidelines for all train games being played in a Puffing Billy Tournament. These guidelines are strictly adhered to in the larger tournaments such as at Origins, GenCon, and RailCon, but, often are either stretched or entirely overlooked at the smaller tournaments where schedules can be more flexible to fit the needs of the participants. I guess my question becomes should we inform our conductors to adhere to time limits even in the small tourneys. Anybody care to comment?

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upcoming releases

Following is a list of train game releases slated for 1997. All information is, of course, subject to change.

1842 by Wolfram Janich, to be produced by Chris Lawson; located in the Holstein area of Northern Germany; release date unknown

18TN by Mark Derrick, produced by Chris Lawson; located in Tennessee and Kentucky; release date unknown

India Rails to be released by Mayfair Games, Inc. The newest entry to the famed Empire Builder or "crayon games" system of train gaming. Expect it to be released in a boxed version for \$30. Release date is expected to be early Fall.

Confederate Rails by Richard Berg, produced by Avalon Hill. Just what it says—a game about rail-roading during the Civil War. Expected release date is early Fall.

Silverton: Various sources tell us that Mayfair Games, Inc still plans to release their version of this popular game. RAIL GAMER informs us that Winsome Games is negotiating the rights for the game. Go figure! If Mayfair produces the game then we can probably expect to see their version this year. If Winsome Games publishes Silverton, they may have to start from scratch which may push the release date back into 1998.

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rick. So it will just require the map to be finished, then the rulebook which should be a lot easier in this case. I am still a bit worried that this game requires a lot more fine tuning to make it workable. I think it will need about 4 months of heavy playtesting to ensure that rules give a fair game. The map needs more work and there are still problems with the Private and Par Prices as well as some rules.

18TN is based on 1830 (but with the 1870 tile mix) and is located in Tennessee and Kentucky. It is intended to be a good introductory game as well as a worthwhile game that takes under 3 hours to play. It seems to be on its way to achieve this as it has added only a few new rules and have removed a lot of the unnecessary 'chrome'. There are only four Private Companies and six Railroad Corporations and is designed for 3 or 4 (maybe 5 as well) players.

1849 by Federico Vellani

Federico has asked if I would like to produce the latest version of his game which he hope will be complete towards the end of the year. I hope to start this in the near future and even if the new version is not ready, I can at least start working on the bulk of the components. I am looking forward to this one as I have asked Federico about producing it for a while now.

1849 is based on Federico

popular 1841 game and is located on the island of Sicily. It is intended to be a more accessible introduction to the 1841 style of 18xx game. It incorporates many new ideas from 1841 but only takes under three hours to play. Two features of the game is use of narrow, normal or dual gauge track (similar to 1853) and Trains that have a 'range' of 4, 6, 8, 12 and 16 hexes. There are actually two scenarios designed specifically for 3 or 4 players, but can be played with 5 players as well. There are five (or six) Railway Corporations but no Private Companies.

Editor's Note: The TGA has decided to continue to highlight small press and independent train game publishers whenever possible. We started this direction with an overview of Federico Vellani's works and now we bring you Chris Lawson.

Mr. Lawson is an interesting case. While his production has never matched that of Mayfair's or Avalon Hill's when these companies produce train games, he has continued to put out product that impresses with its high quality and its variety. He also has access to both the European and North American 18xx train game designers which the TGA delights in and applauds. We are pleased to bring train gamers information on this valuable asset in train gaming.

Mr. Lawson has made arrangements for North American train gamers to order his games through David Reed at 409-361-4751 or dmreed@bihs.net

Tournament

Developments

A New Program for TGA Members: The Divisional PBT

by Heather Barnhorst

During the past winter, many of you have called me, asking me about which Puffing Billy Tournaments I would recommend for you to attend. It seems that with the proliferation of PBTs across the continent, it has become difficult for some of you to decide which PBTs to patronise. I was certainly happy to help you on an individual basis but I also knew that there must be other train gamers who were equally puzzled but who had not picked up the phone to contact me. I decided that there had to be a way of contacting all of you to let you know which PBTs the TGA board considered to be the premier PBTs in their regions.

After much discussion, I think the TGA has developed a new system that benefits our TGA members and the conventions that make a real try to put together top-knotch PBTs. This program is called the Divisional Puffing Billy Tournament.

The Divisional Puffing Billy Tournament Program is a system developed by the

TGA with two intentions. The first idea is to help promote conventions which have consistently supported train gaming through support of the TGA and PBTs. The second is to assist our members by highlighting conventions we feel are worthy of your attention and participation because of their quality and high level of competition.

The TGA has divided North America into a number of divisions based on train gaming activity and the number of Puffing Billy Tournaments™ staged in that area. The Divisional PBT Program is awarded to only one convention in each division. This designation is not a permanent occurrence and can be removed from a convention if it falls beneath the standards we have set or if another convention in the region hosts a better PBT.

With that designation comes a special benefit to the TGA member. As you are aware, the TGA awards points based on number of participants in the tournament. One point is awarded for every 20 players in the tournament with points being rounded

up. In a divisional PBT, that number will become one point for every 15 players.

So, the benefits for you are two-fold. One, you receive the benefit of our knowledge about PBTs across the nation. This information allows you to make better decisions about which PBTs are for you. Second, by participating in these divisional PBTs, you have the chance to gain more TGA points. Of course, the competition will be higher but so is the pay-off.

What does the Divisional PBT Program mean for the conventions? It means that conventions will be given additional support from the TGA in the following ways:

- The conventions will be highlighted within the Train Gamers Gazette as a host of a Divisional PBT. Many train gamers may use this guide when deciding which conventions to attend.
- The conventions will receive bonus points to be awarded to TGA members over and above those given at regular PBTs. Many of our members are fiercely competitive when it comes to acquiring PBT points and will attend PBTs based on how many points they think they can win. This process elevates the level of competition within these designated conventions. That is a good thing for serious train gamers!
- The conventions will receive prize support from

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divisional pbt's

Following is a list of designated divisional PBT's:

SOUTHWEST

Gamex

May 23-26, 1997

LAX Wyndham

Los Angeles, CA

Info: Strategicon

818-848-1748

Puffing Billy Conductors:

Nancy Ballard

Heather Barnhorst

NORTHEAST

Total Confusion

February 1997

Massachusetts Area

Puffing Billy Conductor:

David Mitton

NORTH CENTRAL

Origins '96

July 17-21, 1997

Columbus Ohio Convention Center

Columbus, OH

Info: Andon Unlimited

206-204-5815

Puffing Billy Conductors:

Heather Barnhorst

Kris Marquardt et al.

MIDWEST

Gen Con

Game Faire 1996

August 7-10, 1997

MECCA Convention Center

Milwaukee, WI

Info: Gen Con

Puffing Billy Conductors:

Heather Barnhorst

Kris Marquardt et al.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

Genghis Con XVIII

February 1997

Red Lion Hotel Stapleton

Denver, CO

Puffing Billy Conductor:

Heather Barnhorst

SOUTHEAST

Chattanooga Rail Challenge

March 1997

Chattanooga, TN

Puffing Billy Conductor:

Heather Barnhorst

Mark Derrick

the TGA based on how many train gamers attend the convention's PBT and the type of train game tournaments staged.

- Convention organizers will receive access to the highest rated Puffing Billy Conductors available to run their PBTs. In some cases, the TGA will be willing to send out a team of conductors to run the PBT. We have final approval of Puffing Billy Conductors, ensuring fair judging for our train gamers.

- The TGA may use its knowledge and expertise to help create schedules for the divisional PBTs, allowing a convention to fine-tune its tournament to better serve its train gamers.

To ensure that the Divisional Tournament continues to be of the highest quality, the TGA has set some guidelines for the conventions hosting the PBTs. In this way we can better serve our train gamers.

- We will provide the convention with a Puffing Billy Insert that we ask be included in their preregistration and program booklets. This insert explains the Puffing Billy Tournament™ and its scoring system to train gamers participating in the PBT. We ask this so as to reduce confusion by the gamers as to what rules they are operating under.

- We ask that our promotional materials be displayed in the Puffing Billy Tournament™ area of the PBT so that all train

gamers are aware of the TGA and the PBT circuit across North America.

- We ask that the paperwork be turned into us promptly. If paperwork is incomplete then the convention may lose its designation as a host within the Divisional PBT Program. Without paperwork, we cannot assign TGA points nor can we record the PBT champion. The TGA is dedicated to ensuring that our train gamers receive the recognition that they have earned.

The TGA will work with each convention to customize its Puffing Billy Tournament to fit both the needs of the convention and the TGA and its members. In this way, we can bring a set of standards into play yet allow the individual conventions maintain their individuality.

Already, the TGA has in place a number of divisional tournaments but not all regions have designated PBTs. These regions either do not run PBTs or have not demonstrated to us their willingness to stage a high-quality tournament. As these designations are made, we will inform train gamers through the TGG of the additions to the divisional program.

We hope that this program will benefit both the conventions hosting PBTs and the train gamers participating in them. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact us. The TGA always wants your feedback so as to create a better organization to serve train gamers.

Rules

Questions

A Crayon Game Question

Question:

Heather:

A situation arose in Ed Hewlett's "Invitational" that we wanted to get the TGA's position on.

Ed had a 'crayon games' final, using Eurorails, with four players qualifying. At the end, player #1 delivered a load that brought his total to \$253. Player #2, with nothing to deliver, dumped his cards. Player #3, also with nothing to deliver, dumped his cards and drew the tax card. Player #4, with \$231 in hand had to pay the \$30 tax, resulting in his \$31 delivery only bringing his total to \$231, instead of the \$262 that he would have had if neither player had dumped. Player #1, having already met his victory conditions was presumably unaffected, and therefore won.

Our resulting discussion revolved around several points. At some time in the past, when a player dumped during his first build turn and drew the tax card, it was decided that disasters drawn during the build turns don't count and in fact never take effect unless the deck gets rolled over. The alternative would have been for all players that hadn't yet built to start with only \$40, and it was felt that this would be unfair. Once a player has met the victory conditions, for any other player who is getting his final turn to dump is manifestly unfair to the other players who haven't yet had their final turns, as it cannot possibly help the dumping

player (even if he draws a useful card, he doesn't get another turn in which to deliver it) and it can only hurt the other players.

It was felt that one of several rules should be adopted to cover this situation. Either the victory conditions must be met at the end of the entire turn for all players (in which case the situation described above would have resulted in the game being extended until someone managed to meet victory conditions and maintain them through a round of dumps), or players should only be allowed to take actions that result in a successful delivery (in which dumps would be disallowed on that 'final' turn), or disasters should not apply at all after any player has met victory conditions.

We'd very much like to hear what the TGA, and/or Mayfair games, has to say on the subject. I'm sending this to you because it seems to me that the TGA should be getting answers on such questions and providing them to all of your conductors so as to assure consistent administration of the rules at all sanctioned PBTs.

By the way, in case you're interested, player #1 was Ed, and player #4 was myself. That's the reason why I'm the one sending this inquiry.

Answer:

Dear Al,

At first your question seemed simple to me but as I review the circumstances, I can see that there were some very interesting judgement calls made by your

Puffing Billy Conductor. For instance, the tax card. If it had been my call, I may have simply reshuffled the tax card and other event cards drawn during the pre-movement building phase back into the deck but I cannot quarrel with your PBC for taking the action he did. Obviously, you went through the entire deck once and had started into the deck a second time before the end of the game or you would not have seen the tax card again.

As for the endgame question:

First, you are correct in understanding that event cards do not affect any player who has ALREADY made his or her victory conditions.

But as you say, Player #4 had not met his victory conditions when player #2 and player #3 rolled their cards. If I had been the PBC there, I would have looked at the situation and asked several questions, primarily trying to get at why players #2 and #3 dumped their cards. If they dumped their cards, hoping to somehow win the game, these actions would have been allowed. The only way these actions could have won them the game was if they were carrying speculation loads and were hoping to deliver them to a city but since you can't do anything on the turn that you roll your cards, this outcome would be impossible.

So, the only other reasons they could have for dumping their cards are to either lower player #1's winning score which would result in a better PBT score for player #1 or to prevent you from winning. Both of these reasons are illegal within the rules of the PBT, which expressly forbid any player to manipulate his game so as to improve his standing or to reduce another player's standing in the PBT.

If I had been your Puffing Billy Conductor I would have disallowed players #2 and #3 from dumping their cards in the final round of the game.

Super Chief Tournament

The Superchief Tournament is a new train game that will be running at Three Rivers Game Fest in Pittsburgh on May 23-26, 1997 as an 18xx tournament. All 18xx games are placed into two divisions and the top six scorers in each division go to a division final. Pick-up games are encouraged. The Super Chief tournament is sponsored by RAIL GAMER Magazine and the judges are David Metheny and Carl Burger. The Super Chief scoring system uses a different formula from the PBT for scoring the game results. The organizers say that their scoring system will encourage high victory scores.

Many of you have called to ask if these scores will be compatible with the PBT being run at Three Rivers Game Fest. While they could be, they will not for the simple reason that there is no PBT being run at this con. The TGA felt that it was in the best interest of the con's train gamers not to attempt to run a competing train game tournament. This allows train gamers to concentrate on one type of scoring and advancement.

We hope that the Super Chief is an enjoyable experience for all its participants.

Good Luck Super Chief Players!

While guest conducting at the Chattanooga Rail Challenge in late March, I was able to visit with Anthony Carver, the TGA Train Gamer of the Year for 1996. I was curious about some of Anthony's ideas about train gaming in general and his involvement in the hobby in particular. Our conversation was held while Anthony participated in an 18xx final. How appropriate!

Heather: What was the first train game you ever played?

Anthony: Empire Builder... I saw it at GenCon six or seven years ago.

H: My first was Rail Baron.

A: Oh... oh, that's right I played Rail Baron a couple of times with my gaming group first.

H: When did you play your first 18xx game?

A: About four and a half years ago and we played it all wrong! We played about eight or nine rules interpretations wrong like we thought you could only buy one train at a time.

H: Why do you think you're so successful at train games, you know, in the Puffing Billy Tournaments?

A: Basically I have to attribute it to my gaming group. It's experience, I've seen such nasty games that I can see it coming and defend against it.

H: How many times a week do you play train games?

A: Once a week. Sometimes we meet to play other games and play a train game first, too.

H: How many conventions do you attend a year?

A: It's up to a dozen or so.

H: What is it you like about train games?

A: The competition. It's an ego thing, that you can beat the best. I like that the PBTs keep track so that I can see how I'm doing against other gamers.

H: You mean train gamers?

A: Yeah.

H: Here's a difficult question--what's your favorite train game?

A: That ain't so hard, 1870!

H: Why 1870?

A: It's just well-made. The complexity. The rules are well-written, well-laid out. It has enough quirks to make it unique. And it runs about five hours not too long so people can stretch it out.

H: You've been the PBT Champion at RailCon in '95 and '96. Are you going for a hat trick in 1997?

A: I'm just going to put it his way, I'm going to do my best to win. I'm not going there to lose!

And that folks was that!

A Gamer Highlight will be a regular feature in future issues of the TGG. If you have someone you would like to see highlighted or would like to submit an interview, contact us!

tga rankings

The first number indicates lifetime points and the second number indicates how many points each train gamer has accrued for this year (starting with RailCon '95)

| | Lifetime | YTD |
|----------------------|----------|-----|
| Anthony Carver | 67 | 13 |
| Dave Lionett | 54 | 16 |
| Edward Hewlett | 53 | 4 |
| Jeff Jackson | 27 | 4 |
| Eric Verheiden | 16 | 0 |
| Donna Balkan | 13 | 1 |
| Gordon Waddington | 13 | 1 |
| Don Bingle | 10 | 4 |
| Mike Massullo | 10 | 0 |
| Chuck Finger | 10 | 0 |
| John Puddifoot | 9 | 1 |
| Ken Bachman | 8 | 0 |
| Mike Massullo | 8 | 0 |
| Eyal Mozes | 6 | 6 |
| Wayne W. Williams | 6 | 1 |
| Allen Siles | 5 | 0 |
| Dean Washburn | 5 | 5 |
| Jeri Freedman | 4 | 4 |
| Kristopher Marquardt | 3 | 0 |
| Sandra Hyde | 3 | 3 |
| Chris Acreman | 2 | 2 |
| Nancy Ballard | 2 | 2 |
| Leigh Hyde | 2 | 0 |
| Mark Kauppila | 2 | 0 |
| James Orrison | 2 | 2 |
| Jeremy Vipperman | 2 | 1 |
| Bill Dixon | 1 | 0 |
| Charlie Johns | 1 | 0 |
| David Mitton | 1 | 0 |
| Bill Peeck | 1 | 0 |
| Randy Pletzer | 1 | 1 |
| Nathan Wagner | 1 | 0 |
| David Burns* | 0 | 1 |
| Joseph Dirks* | 0 | 2 |
| Don Daybell* | 0 | 3 |
| Paul Frye* | 0 | 4 |
| William Gallagher* | 0 | 2 |
| Joe Gray* | 0 | 1 |
| Dan Mathias* | 0 | 5 |
| Anthony Medici* | 0 | 7 |
| Paul Slavich* | 0 | 1 |
| Thomas Vilfroy* | 0 | 2 |
| David Zyskowski* | 0 | 4 |

* Denotes train gamers who are not TGA members but who may retain their TGA points if they join the TGA by RailCon '97.

Puffing Billy

Tournament Results

Featured Convention:

Chattanooga Rail

Challenge

March 1997

Chattanooga, TN

Number of Participants: 19

Guest Conductor:

Heather Barnhorst

A Divisional PBT

Puffing Billy Champion:

James Orrison (11.564) -- 2pts

Jeremy Vipperman (11.558) -- 1 pt

I was lucky enough to be invited to attend the Chattanooga Rail Challenge late in March. The host, Mark Derrick, has always been a big booster of the TGA and I was anxious to meet new train gamers in a part of the country I have rarely visited. Despite last minute hotel changes and frustrations, Mark put together a very well run PBT and I was pleased to visit with both new acquaintances and old friends. The competition was high, especially in the 18xx category with 18xxers attending from all parts of the country. Yet, I was delighted to see that some new gamers to the PBT circuit scored highly in the tournament. I would recommend this tournament to any serious train gamer.

Sunquest '97

January 1997

Orlando, FL

Number of Participants: 20

Puffing Billy Conductor:

Trella Wilhite

Puffing Billy Champion: Dave

Lionett (12.117) -- 2 pts

Jeff Jackson (12.106) -- 1 pt

Hi Heather,

I have results from Sunquest for you. Now, on to the results. Dave Lionett came in first with a score of 12.116805. He won in 6 different categories which helped a lot. He only competition (i.e. the only person to get four wins) was Jeff Jackson. Jeff had a score of 12.105991. He only placed in four categories. This years Sunquest was quite good. There were a number of recognizable faces including Dave, Jeff, Ken Bachman, Jeremy Vipperman, Mark Derrick, Wayne Williams, Jeri Freedman, and others.

Trella

Following is a supplementary report from Dave Lionett who attended Sunquest:

Hi Heather,

Not a bad Con... What a contrast to leave Boston with many inches of snow on the ground and arrive in Orlando a few hours later to 90+ temperatures...I was greeted by Con Pres. Jeff Cisneros who is

an excellent host...On Thursday there was a reception with free food-something all gamers appreciate..Ran into Jeff Jackson and Ken Bachman that night, so I knew there would be some good competition.

We had about 20 participants over 3 days-Trella kept score. I squeaked out a narrow win because of a close finish in a 4 player 1870(met Wayne Williams).

When Darwin and Trella presented the updated version of Baby Beth, Crayon gamers commented she had been upgraded to a Heavy Freight, while xxer's said a 4 train had replaced the Railcon version of a 2 train.

Total Confusion XI

February 1997
Massachussetts
Number of Participants: 35
Puffing Billy Conductor:
David Mitton
A Divisional PBT

Puffing Billy Champion:

Anthony Carver (12.727) -- 3 pts
Edward Hewlett (12.623) -- 2 pts
Dave Lionett (12.316) -- 1 pt

I've posted the scores from Total Confusion XI to my web page

<http://www.tiac.net/users/dmitton/tc97pbts.htm>

1830 Winner: Brett Johnson
Empire Builder: Anthony Carver
18XX Winner: Anthony Carver
Empire Builder International:
Edward Hewlett

The PBT seemed rather successful. The new location drew out

some good lurking gamers that didn't like driving the distance to the old site.

However the total attendance was down due to the lack of con publicity due to some mailing delays and problems. Hopefully we won't suffer that problem next year.

Dave.

Dave Mitton
dmitton@mitton.tiac.net
[http://](http://www.tiac.net/users/dmitton)
www.tiac.net/users/dmitton

GordCON

March 1997
Vancouver, BC
Canada
Number of Participants: Less than twenty
Puffing Billy Conductor:
Gordon Waddington

Puffing Billy Champion:

Mike Massullo (11.5703) -- 1 pt

Dear Heather:

Sorry for taking so long to get you the results from GordCON. Things started off with a nail scratcher. Express went seven rounds.

Final standings

Mike Massullo 11.5703 (4 games played)
John Puddifoot 7.2925 (4)
Bill Dixon 5.2130 (3)
Ron Kessler 4.8097 (3)
Gord Waddington 2.4910 (1)
Grant Ellgarde 2.4478 (1)
Greg Jones 0.5923 (2)
Ian Booth 0.0617 (3)

MikeCON 2 coming soon.

Mike Massullo

Genghis Con XVIII

February 1997
Denver, CO
Number of Participants: 28
Puffing Billy Conductor:
Heather Barnhorst
A Divisional PBT

Puffing Billy Champion:

Thomas Vilfroy (12.452) -- 2 pts
Randy Pletzer (11.556) -- 1 pt

Empire Builder: Thomas Vilfroy
1830: John Olsen
Santa Fe: Thomas Vilfroy
Freight Train: Wayne Williams
Express: Randy Pletzer
Streetcar: Mike Osborne
18xx Champion: Anthony Carver
Silverton: Chuck Finger

Orccon 20

February 1997
Los Angeles, CA
Number of Participants: 65
Puffing Billy Conductor:
Nancy Ballard

Puffing Billy Champion:

Patrick Frye (9.964) -- 4 pts
David Lionett (9.696) -- 3 pts
Scott Samarel (8.188) -- 2 pts
Paul Slavich (6.989) -- 1pt

Still waiting on results from:

Egyptian Campaigns
Conn Game Club
OrbCon

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e-mail _____

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- ☐ Please place my name in the TGA Train Gamers Directory

Demographic Information

Your Birthday: ____/____/____ M F

Number of Conventions I attend a year: ____

I game _____ times per week/month/year.

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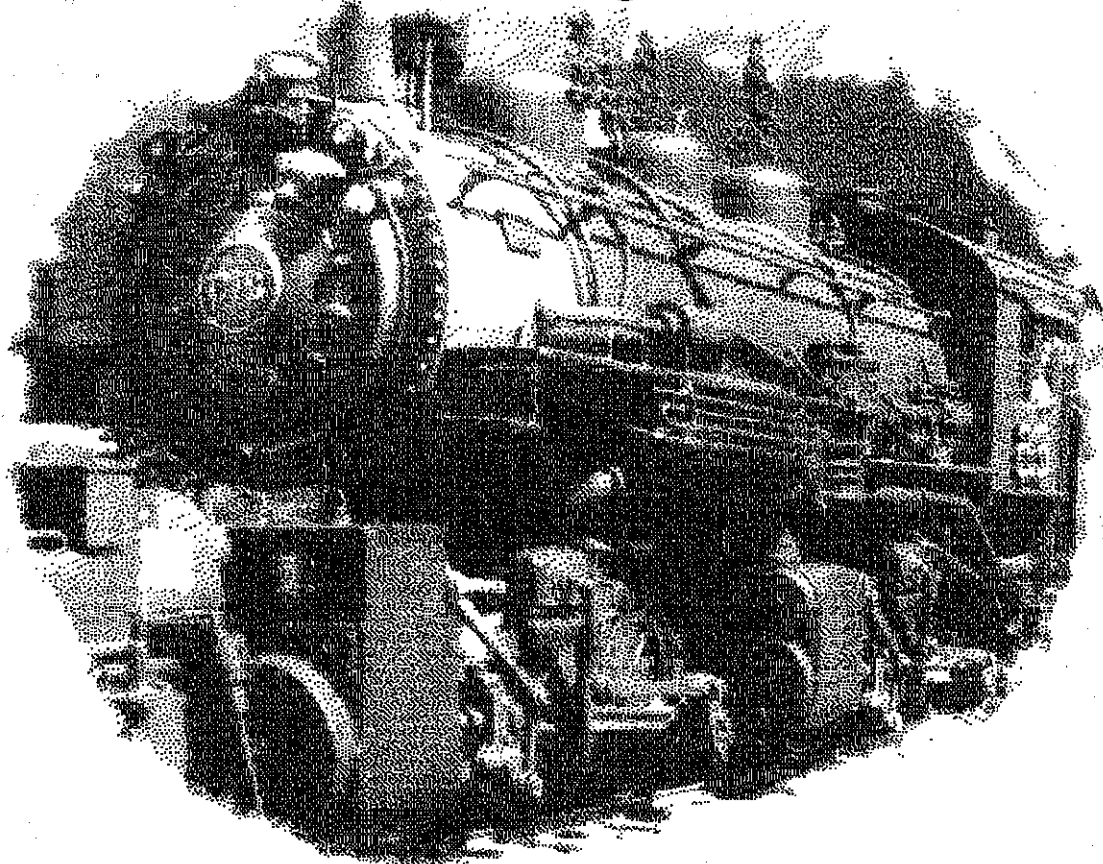
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